

This Page Is Inserted by IFW Operations
and is not a part of the Official Record

BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images may include (but are not limited to):

- BLACK BORDERS
- TEXT CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES
- FADED TEXT
- ILLEGIBLE TEXT
- SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES
- COLORED PHOTOS
- BLACK OR VERY BLACK AND WHITE DARK PHOTOS
- GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS

IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.

**As rescanning documents *will not* correct images,
please do not report the images to the
Image Problem Mailbox.**

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- Sub B2
1. A method for conducting a game, comprising:
providing a range of player selectable numbers;
providing an opportunity for each of a plurality of players to select at least one number within said range of player selectable numbers;
randomly determining a winning number from said range of player selectable numbers; and
determining at least one winning player, wherein said at least one winning player comprises a player who has selected a number that is closer to said winning number than any other number selected by any other player of the plurality.
 2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising making an award to said at least one winning player.
 3. The method according to claim 2, wherein determining at least one winning player comprises determining a plurality of winning players.
 4. The method according to claim 3, further comprising apportioning said award among said plurality of winning players.
 5. The method according to claim 1, wherein said range of player selectable numbers is either linear or continuous.
 6. The method according to claim 2, further including requiring players of said plurality to tender a wager to enable said opportunity to select at least one number within said range of player selectable numbers.

7. The method according to claim 1, further including determining said winning number using a random number generator.

8. The method according to claim 1, further comprising requiring players of said plurality to actuate a selection submission input confirmation element in order to effect submission of each number selection.

9. The method according to claim 1, further comprising administering the game over a distributed network comprising a plurality of gaming terminals, each gaming terminal having associable therewith a communication link to a central controller.

10. A method for conducting a game, comprising:
providing a range of player selectable numbers;
providing an opportunity for each of a plurality of players to select at least one number within said range of player selectable numbers;
displaying the selections made by said plurality of players substantially in real-time;
providing at least one additional opportunity for each of said plurality of players to select at least one additional number within said range of player selectable numbers;
terminating all opportunities for players of said plurality to select numbers;
randomly determining a winning number from said range of player selectable numbers;
determining at least one winning player, wherein said at least one winning player comprises a player who has selected a number that is closer to said winning number than any other number selected by any other player of said plurality; and
making an award to said at least one winning player.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein determining said at least one winning player comprises determining a plurality of winning players.

12. The method according to claim 11, further comprising apportioning said award among said plurality of winning players.

13. The method according to claim 10, wherein said range of player selectable numbers is either linear or continuous.

14. The method according to claim 10, further comprising requiring said players of said plurality to tender at least a minimum wager before said opportunity to select at least one number or said at least one additional opportunity to select at least one additional number within said range of player selectable numbers is enabled.

15. The method according to claim 14, wherein said players are enabled to tender a multiple of said at least a minimum wager in order to obtain the at least a same multiple of said opportunity or said at least one additional opportunity to select at least one number within said range of player selectable numbers.

16. The method according to claim 10, further comprising determining said winning number using a random number generator.

17. The method according to claim 10, further comprising requiring each of said plurality of players to actuate a selection submission input confirmation element in order to effect submission of each number selection.

18. The method according to claim 17, further comprising providing a sensory notification to all players of each submission of each number selection by any player of said plurality.

19. The method according to claim 10, further comprising administering the game over a distributed network comprising a plurality of gaming terminals, each gaming terminal having associable therewith a communication link to a central controller.

20. The method according to claim 19, further comprising enabling each player to play the game via personal access to a gaming terminal.

21. The method according to claim 19, further comprising enabling each player to play the game at a gaming terminal accessed by another person on the player's behalf.

22. The method according to claim 19, further comprising enabling each player to play the game via a personal computer serving as a gaming terminal and operably connected to said distributed network via the Internet.

23. The method according to claim 10, further comprising displaying a termination notification to notify players that the game is about to terminate.

24. The method according to claim 23, wherein displaying said termination notification comprises displaying a timer that counts down through a period of time to a time of termination of the game.

25. A gaming system, comprising:
a plurality of gaming terminals; and
a central controller accessible by each of said gaming terminals via a communication link
associated with each of said gaming terminals;
wherein each of said gaming terminals comprises:
a device for recording a player wager;
a selection mechanism enabling a player to indicate a selection of a number within a
range of player selectable numbers; and

circuitry enabled, responsive to recordation of said player wager, for transmitting said selection of a number in association with said player wager to said central controller via said associated communication link; and
wherein said central controller comprises:

circuitry for receiving number selections via said communication link associated with each of said plurality of gaming terminals, displaying said number selections substantially in real-time, determining a time for terminating a game, randomly determining a winning number, determining at least one winning player, wherein said at least one winning player comprises a player who has selected a number that is closer to said winning number than any other number selected by any other player, and making an award to said at least one winning player.

26. The gaming system of claim 25, wherein each of said plurality of gaming terminals includes a display associated therewith.

27. The gaming system of claim 25, wherein each of said plurality of gaming terminals is configured to accept wagers and number selections directly from players.

28. The gaming system of claim 25, wherein said central controller further comprises circuitry for compiling number selections in an order of selection time in order to enable comparison thereof as to said order of selection time.

29. The gaming system of claim 25, wherein said central controller further comprises a clock for determining a time order of number selections received.

30. The gaming system of claim 29, wherein each of said plurality of gaming terminals comprises a clock for associating each number selection made at the respective gaming terminal with a time of the number selection.

31. The gaming system of claim 30, further comprising circuitry of said central controller and circuitry of each of said plurality of gaming terminals for maintaining said clock of said central controller and said clock of each of said plurality of gaming terminals in substantial synchronicity.

32. The gaming system of claim 31, wherein said circuitry of said central controller and said circuitry of each of said plurality of gaming terminals for maintaining said central controller and gaming terminal clocks in substantial synchronicity is responsive to communications between said central controller and each of said plurality of gaming terminals.

33. The gaming system of claim 25, wherein at least some of said plurality of gaming terminals comprise gaming terminals located at a retail outlet.

34. The gaming system of claim 25, wherein at least some of said plurality of gaming terminals comprises gaming terminals located at a casino.

35. The gaming system of claim 25, wherein at least some of said plurality of gaming terminals comprise gaming terminals enabled to access said central controller via the Internet.